



# INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHARITIES

# PRIEST *to* PRIEST

VOLUME 1, NO. 1 SPRING 2000

## Why Not IOCC?

United Way, International Red Cross, Catholic Charities, UNICEF, Lutheran World Services, etc. These are some of the best known humanitarian aid organizations that come to the minds of Orthodox faithful in America when they consider making a charitable contribution. And I ask, "why not IOCC?"

IOCC, established by SCOPA in 1992, has an international presence. It maximizes private donations ten-fold by accessing U.S. tax dollars and international funds (\$100M in 8 years!). It is acclaimed by governments and recognized by peer organizations for its professionalism, effectiveness and economic efficiency (10% administrative cost). It provides aid based exclusively on the needs of people. It has a dedicated Board of Directors and an outstanding staff. Most important, it is ours! It is an Orthodox organization, providing opportunity for Pan-Orthodox fellowship and ministry in America.

My personal goal is to make IOCC a household word in every Orthodox home in America. To do this, your help - the almost 2,000 Orthodox priests in parishes of all Orthodox jurisdictions throughout America - is needed. If the people are to become aware of IOCC and its sacred mission, it will be because of you! If IOCC is to be their chosen humanitarian aid charity, it will be because of the guidance they receive from you! If groups of Pan-Orthodox laity are to organize at the parish and city-wide levels in support of IOCC, it will be because of encouragement from you!

This is the inaugural issue of PRIEST TO PRIEST, my quarterly newsletter to fellow Orthodox priests. I will provide you with cogent updates; I will suggest ways to help with this sacred ministry at the parish level; I will invite your suggestions, questions and constructive criticism; I will ask for guest articles; I will ask you to consider the question, Why not IOCC? Together, we can make IOCC a household word in every Orthodox home in America!

**Fr. Jim Kyriakakis, *Director of Development***

## The People Speak

IOCC Metropolitan Committees are forming across the country. These groups, encouraged by parish priests and our Orthodox Bishops, are organized and led by lay people from local parishes of all Orthodox jurisdictions. They are doing a marvelous job, and want to do more!

A major initiative by Metropolitan Committees is an awareness effort - a campaign to get the word out, to help make IOCC a household word in every Orthodox home in America. They need the support and cooperation of their parish priests. These volunteers will be approaching you for your permission and encouragement to make a 2 or 3 minute "pulpit announcement" or to offer a 5 to 10 minute presentation about IOCC at a coffee hour or luncheon. Please welcome them and give them your support!

## IOCC At Your Festival

The Annual Festival has become an important event in many of our Orthodox parishes across America. It presents our culture and religion to the wider population; it brings out the very best in volunteerism among our people; and, it provides much needed financial income for the local church.

It can also be an excellent vehicle for getting the message about IOCC to many, many more people. If you can arrange for IOCC to have a presence at your festival (a booth or table), we will take it from there. Volunteers from an IOCC Metropolitan Committee will staff it; literature will be available; the IOCC video will play continuously on a "loop"; questions will be answered; names will be gathered of people who want to be kept informed.

With the support and encouragement of you, the parish priest, this can be done. Just think of the powerful impact on the lives of people in need worldwide if our parishes across the country latched onto this idea! One more way to make IOCC a household word in every Orthodox home in America!

# Volunteerism

The long-awaited IOCC humanitarian aid program in the United States is scheduled to begin during 2000. In addition to responding to the needs of people here at home and providing more awareness of IOCC's work, the projects for the U.S. program will help instill a new, fresh paradigm among Orthodox Christians about volunteerism. More information about the U.S. program will be provided in the next issue of *PRIEST TO PRIEST*.

In the meanwhile, IOCC is completing plans for encouraging participation of Orthodox parishes in National Volunteer Week (April 9-15). Without volunteers, IOCC would not be able to carry out its ministry. Your help is needed in helping us recognize our volunteers.

*A Salute to Volunteers*, written by IOCC Executive Director Dean Triantafilou, will be mailed to all Orthodox priests during March, with the request that it be read in church on Sunday, April 9th. Your help with this effort is appreciated.

## Pascha - A Caring Time

Watch for a special mailing during March about IOCC's Spring Campaign focused around the Feast of Pascha.

In addition to a direct mailing to our donors and potential donors, materials will be provided to each parish priest. Please use them as you feel best for reaching everyone in your parish (newsletters and bulletins, pulpit announcements, postings, etc.).

# Feedback Please

I need and would appreciate receiving your suggestions, questions and constructive criticism. Perhaps you have an idea about how to better bring IOCC and its work to the attention of the faithful; or, a suggestion for recruiting volunteers to help with the effort at the local level; or, an improvement that can be made in our communications or various materials. Maybe you have a thought to share about fundraising; or, a critical observation about an IOCC project or policy. Contact me by phone at 410-243-9820 (or toll free at 877-803-4622), by Fax at 410-243-9824, or by email at [IOCCDEV@AOL.COM](mailto:IOCCDEV@AOL.COM). Of course, you can always write at the address below. I will be pleased to hear from you.

## The Support Grows

There can be no doubt that the Orthodox faithful of America are increasingly supportive of IOCC and its ministry. More than \$10M in eight years from private donations (individuals, parishes, parish organizations, and others). These private donations are maximized as much as ten-fold, providing the funds required for services to people in need. The data for 1999 shows that about 22% of all Orthodox parishes and about 14% of all priests donated during the year to IOCC. Also, an increasing number of parish organizations (about 32% of those in our database) made donations. Obviously, there is plenty of potential for further growth. This is where the help of you, the local parish priest, is needed most. You can help us bring awareness to your parishioners about IOCC, you can encourage your parish leaders and organizations to become donors, and you can consider becoming a donor yourself.

*"But the needy will not always be forgotten, nor the hope of the afflicted ever perish." (Psalms 9:18)*

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